

GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM CODE OF CONDUCT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Policy:

The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) is appointed to represent the best interests of a child within the child protection/court process. This is a role of considerable importance and public trust and as such, the GAL is expected to demonstrate conduct which is responsible, ethical, law abiding and respectful of the parties and participants.

Reason:

The guardian ad litem is a representative of the program. The actions of the employee/volunteer reflect on all other guardians ad litem, the program, and staff.

Expectations:

The Guardian ad Litem will:

- Utilize the rights and responsibilities in the role appropriately to advocate for the best interests of the child.
- Comply with applicable laws and rules – both state and federal, as well as court rules, GAL program policies – including accepting the role of mandatory reporter of child abuse and neglect as set forth in Minnesota Statute 626.556.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.
- Not discriminate, nor manifest by words or conduct, a bias or prejudice based upon race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, age or other groups protected by law.
- Disclose any real or potential conflict of interest as soon as possible to the program and/or court, including current, former or potential relationships of a personal or professional/business nature which may compromise the independence and credibility of the guardian ad litem on an individual case, or compromise the program's purpose and goals.
- Not use the position for personal advantage and have no direct or indirect financial interest in the assets, leases, business transactions or professional service of the program.

- Establish appropriate boundaries with children, families and parties/participants and service providers.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure personal safety.
- Notify the program immediately of any criminal charges filed against the guardian ad litem or other court involvement of the guardian ad litem.
- Notify the program immediately of any criminal charges filed against an immediate family member.
- Notify their manager/coordinator once they become aware they are a party, victim, or a witness in any case before the court within their district, with the exception of uncontested petty misdemeanor traffic citations.

Applicability:

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers within the Guardian ad Litem Program.

Consequence:

Employees or volunteers who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including loss of position.

ORIGINATION DATE: October 2, 2014

LAST UPDATED: November 20, 2018

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Confidentiality Policy

Conflict of Interest Policy

Employee Code of Ethics Policy

Non - Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Safety Policy